



## **FRIENDS OF WHITE OAK MINUTES**

February 9, 2021 at 7pm - ONLINE MEETING

Zoom link to join is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86068809903>

### **1) Welcome**

- a. Present - Elisse, Dave, Rachael, Daniel, Fatmata, June, Ken, Rob, Barry, Shana, and Bruce.

### **2) Minutes from January 13, 2021 were approved.**

### **3) Guest Speaker – Congressman John Sarbanes representing the Maryland's 3rd Congressional District.**

- a. After introductions, Congressman Sarbanes began with an overview of what's happening in the Federal Government and his role at a time of a pandemic. Health and economic concerns are top among his priorities. The Cares Act, American Rescue Plan, and the Heroes Act provide help for small business, minority institutions, non-profits, and resident assistance. Impeachment trial's verdict is pending. The Congressman is a leading sponsor of the For the People Act which seeks to improve the way the country's democracy works.
- b. There are challenges for White Oak to move development projects forward in this difficult time. The White Oak community revolves around the FDA. The WOSG Master Plan is linked to the FDA, but many projects have been put on hold due to Covid-19.
- c. Barry explained FOWO is the group brought together to implement the master plan. A significant share of White Oak is in an Opportunity Zone, but the tax benefits have depleted and there is an effort to renew the tax credits by Congress. The Congressman noted many are interested in the Opportunity Zones and he supports them. Barry expressed his appreciation for Congress funding the BRT Tiger Grant (2019) and hopes Congressman Sarbanes will also help with the New Hampshire Avenue BRT. Congressman Sarbanes noted there are many interested in the Opportunity Zones and he supports the zones. Comments and ideas may be directed to his Community Outreach Specialist, Vicki Garcia. The

Congressman said he would be happy to look more into a future Tiger Grant for the New Hampshire BRT.

- d. Rob discussed the November action by the County Council to lift the impact taxes in Opportunity Zones which is a benefit to Viva White Oak.
- e. Ken suggested schools like Montgomery Blair could partner with the FDA on STEM projects. Congressman Sarbanes supports collaboration as he spent seven years with the State Department creating partnerships with businesses like Northam Grumman. Creativity is important for high school students.
- f. Dave asked his thoughts on AmeriCorps and National Service. Congressman Sarbanes supports both organizations and wants to build on their success. Those programs are an opportunity to meet new people and exchange ideas. He would like to work on more details so more people may take advantage of the opportunity.
- g. Shana wanted to know what at the Federal level to help the Maryland distribution process of Covid-19 vaccines. Congressman Sarbanes said the Montgomery County delegation sent a letter to Governor Hogan expressing concerns and dissatisfaction of how the allocation for vaccines are made and noting bigger counties should receive more supplies. The letter also inquired as to why Maryland is way down the list in terms of effective administration of the vaccine. The Biden Administration is increasing vaccine production and output by 10 to 15%. The Biden Administration is giving states three weeks' notice of amounts coming to them. The President is bringing attention to the infection rate in underserved communities. He is trying and to make sure no community is underserved. More information needs to be shared to avoid resentment and friction.

#### 4) Updates from Pete

- a. The County Attorney's draft language for the bill that would create the White Oak Advisory Committee will be ready this Friday. After proofing, it will be sent to the County Council for approval.
- b. The County Executive and Pete met with the developers for the Hillandale Gateway and the Town Center projects. Both projects are important to Mr. Elrich. Since that meeting, members of the Hillandale Gateway Team and Pete have met with the Department of Permitting Services to help ensure a timely permitting process. The same will happen with the Town Center Team.

#### 5) Updates from Lt. Cole

- a. Grant money has run out and he is pushing for more funding. MCPD has been very successful in discouraging the “meet ups” with car drag racing. The Police block off the Burtonsville Shopping Center which deters racers from participating. Crime Numbers – car theft is up due to the cold weather and people warming their cars up in the AM. With respect to the recent fatal pedestrian collision, they have no suspect. They do know the car is a silver Nisan Sentra with left front damage. Several commercial vehicles have been ticketed/towed for parking issues. Pete offered to help with police grant lobbying.

#### 6) From the Board

- a. Board Member Assignments Progress
  - i. Dave – asked subcommittees to give reports at the March meeting.
- b. Farmers’ Market
  - 1. Vote to authorize FOWO farmers’ market subcommittee to negotiate with a vendor for market management services. Rachael noted they interviewed five managers. Good experience. After interviews, managers were ranked, and a favorite was chosen. They are confirming the Dow Jones site. The Bank of America lot may be used for parking on Sundays. Market kickoff will be in spring of 2022. Social media, advertising, and banners with sponsors are all being investigated. Rachael is working with Barry on the crosswalk at 29 and Stewart to help with market pedestrian traffic. The Police have been asked to help as well. Motion to authorize the subcommittee to negotiate with a manager passed.
- c. Incorporation Process
  - i. Kim – FOWO was incorporated! The 1024 IRS application is being finalized. Opening a bank account and drafting a budget are next on the list. Kim is also working on developing a sponsorship for businesses with the message of what they can get from sponsoring FOWO. Dave thanked Kim. Motion to open an account at Mid Atlantic Federal Credit Union passed.
- d. Closing of the White Oak Shopping Center Sears
  - i. Pete gave background with help from Jewru. MoCo College is interested in the site as a possible satellite branch. Fatmata asked about the opportunities for sub-leasing. Barry asked if anyone has spoken to JLL. Jewru discussed the ad from JLL. He is concerned about the employees losing their jobs. Shana asked how many employees

may lose their positions. Jewru wasn't sure, but most are from the immediate area. 142 being laid off from Shop Rite at Orchard Place as well. Elisse suggested the ULI should look at White Oak again. Pete offered to connect with ULI. Shana noted how Sears is a major focal point in the master plan area. Being vacant is detrimental to the community. Barry suggested connecting MCEDC with JLL to offer support from the community. Jewru has been in touch with state and the economic folks. Bruce said there are safety issues to consider such as Lighting, security – things can get bad. He requested the Police be kept in the loop. Elisse mentioned the Pandemic Center for a fit in White Oak. Shana said we should not lose sight of the long-term plans for White Oak and its master plan. White Oak Shopping Center plays a key role in the plan. Jewru agreed. Rachael mentioned not only Sears, but the entire Shopping Center has issues. Barry said the County inspector told him the White Oak Shopping Center could apply for a permit to have the tractor trailers park on the site. Elisse asked what the trash has to do with the trailers.

e. Fundraising Proposal

- i. Elisse approached her homeowners' association for contributions to FOWO. FOWO needs a mailing address and website to demonstrate we are legit. Also looking for sponsors for the farmers' market.
- ii. Pete addressed the FY21 50K and the FY22 100K. He is working on procurement for the existing 50K and he has confirmed the 100K is in the FY22 request from the Executive to the County Council.

f. Other Comments

- i. Kim has applied to the Do-Good Institute for an intern. She has looked at three candidates, at \$15 an hour for 10 weeks. One may apply for reimbursement for up to \$2500.
- ii. Jewru let the Board know there is a County/State restaurant grant with a deadline of February 10<sup>th</sup>. First grant round is \$10K and second amount is \$5K. Also, the County plans to target hot spots for vaccinations and White Oak Briggs Chaney is on the list. Rachael knows people having trouble getting appointments. Jewru said they are getting more information soon.
- iii. Margie Goergen-Rood of the Hillandale Community asked about the Hillandale Gateway and if Shane is still involved. Yes, Shane is still involved. He has formed his

own company, but is very much a part of Duffie Company projects. Also, what is being recommended for the LATIP. The study is out now and posted on the White Oak Website. A public meeting will be scheduled by DOT soon.

7) From the Public – Opportunity to Bring up a Topic Not on the Agenda

a. No comments

8) Adjourn (8:30pm)